

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace Paragraph [0003] with the following paragraph:

[0003] Since catalytic converters operate at very high temperatures, they are typically provided with an external heat shield. However, it has been found that these heat shields produce a significant component of noise, vibration, and harshness (NVH) ~~NVH~~ originating from the exhaust system. For example, catalytic converter systems with a heat shield may produce at least several dB higher noise levels than systems without heat shields. Therefore, original equipment manufacturers are willing to pay for and are demanding improved heat shields that significantly reduce the noise from the exhaust system related to NVH.